

Committee on Environmental Preservation And Conservation

CS/HB 7065 — Everglades Improvement and Management

by Appropriations Committee; State Affairs Committee; and Rep. Caldwell and others (CS/SB 768 by Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee and Senator Simpson)

The bill amends s. 373.4592, F.S., to merge Florida's existing Long-Term Plan with the South Florida Water Management District's (SFWMD) Restoration Strategies plan in order to create a single comprehensive plan for achieving the restoration efforts envisioned under the Everglades Forever Act (EFA). The bill allows the SFWMD to continue to use ad-valorem funds currently collected in accordance with the EFA for the continued implementation of the Long-Term Plan. The bill also extends the agricultural privilege tax in the Everglades Agricultural Area as follows:

- \$25 an acre for tax notices mailed November 2014 to November 2026;
- \$20 per acre for tax notices mailed November 2027 to November 2029;
- \$15 per acre for tax notices mailed November 2030 to November 2035; and
- \$10 per acre for tax notices mailed on or after November 2036.

The bill appropriates \$12 million in recurring general revenue funds and \$20 million in recurring funds from the Water Management Lands Trust Fund for the Restoration Strategies Regional Water Quality Plan starting in Fiscal Year 2013-2014 and each year thereafter through Fiscal Year 2023-2024. The bill also directs the SFWMD to conduct a use attainability analysis after all of the projects and improvements in the Long-Term Plan are complete.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 114-0